

ISOTRIA MEDEOLOIDES ON THE PIEDMONT OF VIRGINIA

Plant distribution on the Piedmont of Virginia is more poorly known than for any physiographic province of the state. Aside from a northern portion of the Piedmont where Washington botanists frequently collect, and Amelia County where Mr. J. B. Lewis worked many years ago, collections from this part of Virginia are scanty and come from scattered localities. Travel in the area quickly demonstrates the reasons for a paucity of collections. The Piedmont is botanically uninteresting compared with other regions of Virginia, and it is difficult to find good collecting grounds. Oak-hickory and pine forests form much of the dominant vegetation and few habitats are available for rare and local species.

Dr. G. W. Ramsey with his coworkers, and the author with much help from many interested persons, are making concerted efforts to close gaps in our knowledge of plant distribution and ecology of the region. A result of this work is the discovery of several relict areas which have an important bearing on the ecology and vegetational history of Virginia.

Such an enclave with many relict populations occurs in southern Buckingham County. Here soils of lower wooded slopes have very high calcium, magnesium, and pH values, and in these soils grow many plants which are rare or unknown elsewhere in the Piedmont. Among localized species are *Carex jamesii* Schwein., *Tradescantia virginiana* L., *Trillium sessile* L., *Cypripedium calceolus* L., *Ostrya virginiana* (Mill.) K. Koch, *Ulmus rubra* Muhl., *Draba ramosissima* Desv., *Rhus aromatica* Ait., *Euonymus atropurpureus* Jacq., *Aesculus octandra* Marsh., *Hybanthus concolor* (Frost.) Spreng., *Panax quinquefolius* L., *Phlox divaricata* L., *Conopholis americana* L., *Campanula americana* L., *C. divaricata* Michx., and *Polymnia canadensis* L. Many popu-

lations within the general area are localized colonies of few individuals.

Many of these species have one or more outliers on the coastal plain where they are edaphic relicts of more widespread distributional patterns of the past. Since these localized plants have their main population centers in the mountains to the west, we were greatly surprised to find a single individual of the rare *Isotria medeoloides* (Pursh) Raf. formerly known also as *Pogonia affinis*, in the Buckingham County area. Barbara J. Harvill found the orchid growing on a wooded north-facing slope. Dr. Donovan Correll kindly confirmed its identity. This pogonia is extremely rare in Virginia and was heretofore known only on the coastal plain (Baldwin, 1968; Grimes, 1921; Taylor, 1934). The discovery adds another species to those with remarkable disjunct populations in Virginia.

A. M. HARVILL, JR.
LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

REFERENCES

- BALDWIN, J. T., JR. 1968. Obituary for an orchid. *Virginia Wildlife* 24: 22.
- GRIMES, E. J. 1921. A new station for *Pogonia affinis*. *Rhodora* 23: 195-197.
- TAYLOR, RAYMOND L. 1934. The present status of *Pogonia affinis*. *Claytonia* 1: 5.